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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6360
INFO RUESBG/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 6727
RUEHGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA 1547
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ 2121
RUESLM/AMEMBASSY LIMA 3634
RUESMG/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA 1588
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 1270
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 5432
RUEHSJ/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE 1913
RUEHSN/AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR 1379
RUEOEHA/USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN//
RUEHDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 8109
RUESQI/AMEMBASSY QUITO 3467
RUEHTG/AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA 1241
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E.O. 12356: DECL: 07/08/89

TAGS: PREL, CO, VE

SUBJ: PRESIDENTS OF COLOMBIA AND VENEZUELA MEET TO

- PAY HOMAGE TO SIMON BOLIVAR AND TO DISCUSS

- AREAS OF INTEREST

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. IN CELEBRATION OF THE BICENTENNIAL OF THE BIRTH
OF SIMON BOLIVAR, COLOMBIA'S PRESIDENT, BELISARIO
<BETANCUR CUARTAS, AND VENEZUELA'S PRESIDENT, LUIS

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(HERRERA-CAMPINS, MET ON JULY 7 IN THE VENEZUELAN FRONTIER TOWN OF SAN ANTONIO DE TACHIRA TO DEDICATE JOINTLY THE PLAZA OF COLOMBIAN-VENEZUELAN FRATERNITY AND TO UNVEIL A STATUE OF "EL LIBERTADOR." BOTH THE CEREMONY AND THE PRESIDENTS' SPEECHES WERE WIDELY AND LAUDATORILY REPORTED IN THE VENEZUELAN MEDIA.

3. INVOKING THE MEMORY AND VISION OF BOLIVAR, THE TWO PRESIDENTS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE ADDRESSES ENUNCIATED THE THEME OF BROTHERHOOD, UNITY, AND SOLIDARITY BOTH WITH RESPECT TO THEIR TWO COUNTRIES--"DIRECT HEIRS TO BOLIVAR'S VISION OF ONE GREAT NATION"--AND TO ALL OF LATIN AMERICA. HERRERA, ESPECIALLY, EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR THE TWO NATIONS TO LEAD LATIN AMERICA "IN THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY, IN THE REJECTION OF ALL VESTIGES OF COLONIALISM, AND IN THE SECURING OF ECONOMIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL INDEPENDENCE." AS COLORFUL AND PATRIOTIC AS THE COLOMBIAN AND VENEZUELAN FLAGS WHICH RINGED THE PLAZA, THE SPEECHES DEALT, HOWEVER, WITH LITTLE OF SUBSTANCE.

4. UPON HIS ARRIVAL IN SAN ANTONIO DE TACHIRA AND IN RESPONSE TO REPORTERS' QUESTIONS, HERRERA STATED THAT IN CONVERSATION AFTER THE PLAZA CEREMONIES HE AND BETANCUR WOULD MOST ASSUREDLY DISCUSS THE BORDER DISPUTE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES ("AN INEVITABLE TOPIC OF CONVERSATION FOR THE LEADERS OF COLOMBIA AND VENEZUELA"), THE PROBLEMS OF CENTRAL AMERICA, THE CONTADORA PROCESS, AND THE ANDEAN PACT. HE ALSO SAID THE AGENDA FOR THEIR TALKS WAS OPEN. HERRERA REPORTEDLY STATED LATER THAT THE MEETING HAD PRODUCED MUCH OF BENEFIT TO BOTH COUNTRIES AND THAT THESE BENEFITS WOULD SOON BE MADE PUBLIC.

5. BETANCUR REPORTEDLY STATED THAT HE IS INCLINED TO CONTINUE BORDER NEGOTIATIONS, ALTHOUGH THEY WOULD NOT BE HELD WITH THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION. "THERE IS ALWAYS TIME FOR DIALOGUE, AND EVERYTHING CAN BE SETTLED THROUGH DIALOGUE." ONLY WHEN DIALOGUE HAS RUN OUT, HE REPORTEDLY SAID, IS IT NECESSARY TO RESORT TO OTHER METHODS, BUT THESE WOULD ALSO BE LEADING TOWARD RECONCILIATION, RESPECTING THE AUTONOMY OF EACH COUNTRY. FOREIGN MINISTER ZAMBRANO REPORTEDLY AGREED THAT THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION WOULD NOT CONTINUE NEGOTIATION OF THE DISPUTE.

6. COMMENT: IT SEEMS MOST IMPROBABLE THAT THE MEETING COULD HAVE PRODUCED MANY RESULTS. HERRERA, A LAME-DUCK PRESIDENT, IS APPARENTLY DETERMINED TO END HIS TERM IN OFFICE WITH A SUCCESSION OF COLORFUL CEREMONIALS WHILE LEAVING MAJOR PROBLEMS TO BE RESOLVED BY THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION. A LIKELY SUBJECT FOR SUBSTANTIVE TALKS WAS, OF COURSE, THE CONTADORA PROCESS IN ANTICIPATION OF NEXT WEEK'S MEETING IN CARACAS--A SUBJECT IN WHICH BOTH PRESIDENTS ARE DEEPLY INTERESTED. ON THE OTHER HAND, NEW EFFORTS TO RESOLVE

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POINTS OF CONTENTION BETWEEN COLOMBIA AND VENEZUELA
WILL HAVE TO AWAIT THE INAUGURATION OF A NEW PRESIDENT.
END COMMENT. LANDAU

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